

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a liquid-pervious user-facing first side including a first portion consisting of a hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, to define the region of the first side to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the first and second sides,

wherein the second portion consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture,

an outer edge of the second portion being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the first portion, wherein an extent of the second portion is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body,

wherein the second portion is hump-shaped so as to project past the first portion in the direction of a user.

36-38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) A method for maintaining a mucous membrane of a user moist with an absorbent article, the absorbent article including an absorbent body, a user-facing liquid-pervious first side which includes a first portion and a second portion, the article further including a second side opposite the first side and having a liquid impervious layer, the first portion formed of a hydrophobic material, and the second portion formed of a hydrophilic absorbent material, the second

portion arranged to be first wetted by body fluid, the absorbent body being disposed between the first and second sides, the method comprising:

wearing the absorbent article such that the second portion is adjacent the mucous membrane of the user and first receives body fluids emitted from the user;

retaining at least a portion of the body fluids in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the second portion; and

maintaining the mucous membrane of the user moist with the body fluids retaining in the hydrophilic absorbent material of the second portion,

wherein an extent of the second portion is smaller than an extent of the absorbent body; and

wherein the second portion is hump-shaped so as to project past the first portion in the direction of the user.

40. (Previously Presented) Absorbent article for maintaining mucous membranes of a user moist, the absorbent article comprising:

a user-facing liquid-pervious first side including a first portion consisting of hydrophobic material, and a second portion forming a wetting region adapted to be disposed adjacent the mucous membranes of the user, to define the region of the first side intended to first be wetted by body fluid emitted to the article,

a second side opposite the first side and including a liquid-impervious surface layer, and

an absorbent body disposed between the first and second sides,

wherein the second portion consists of hydrophilic absorbent material that is adapted to retain moisture, so as to maintain the mucous membranes of the user moist, an outer edge portion of the second portion being bordered by the hydrophobic material of the first portion which is situated laterally outwardly of the second portion and overlies the absorbent body,

wherein the second portion is hump-shaped so as to project past the first portion in the direction of the user.